



Mississippi Chapter

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PEDIATRICIANS SEND URGENT MESSAGE TO SCHOOL LEADERSHIP, TEACHERS, AND PARENTS

Mississippi has unfortunately recorded two additional pediatric deaths this past week, bringing the total for the month of September to **3**, the highest month ever during the pandemic. There have been **6** pediatric deaths in our state since the end of July, which is double what was reported the entire previous 16 months.

MASKS

Some schools have begun to relax their mask mandates as community cases have started to decline. MSAAP urges school boards, superintendents, teachers, and parents to continue with masks requirements in all indoor school settings to slow the transmission of COVID-19.

Two studies published this past week add to the abundant literature that masks in the school setting work. The study from the MMWR found that “after adjusting for potential described confounders, the odds of a school-associated COVID-19 outbreak in schools without a mask requirement were 3.5 times higher than those in schools with an early mask requirement.”

<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7039e1.htm>

VACCINATIONS

MSAAP also continues to encourage vaccinations of all eligible students, parents, teachers, and staff ages 12 and up. Mississippi currently ranks 47 out of 51 in percentage of the population fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and we rank #1 in the nation in COVID-19 case fatality rate.

HOSPITALIZATIONS

There is one pediatric Children’s Hospital in Mississippi, and it is again seeing a rise in acute cases of COVID-19 and MIS-C. While the total number of COVID-19 cases hospitalized at UMMC has dropped (adults and children), cases in children under 12 who are unable to be vaccinated now account for 31% of all hospitalizations. Dr. Charlotte Hobbs, professor of pediatric infectious disease at Children’s of Mississippi states, “Acute COVID hospitalizations are increasing again it seems and it is timed exactly with schools dropping mask requirements.”

MSAAP is available to provide pediatricians to speak to school leadership and parents. Please contact our office for more information.